



Relaxation Techniques for Musicians

Two types of tension:

- **Functional Tension:** good for coordination, voluntary tension, directed and focused tension, helpful in refinement of complicated techniques.
- **Dysfunctional Tension:** unconscious so it can be hard to control.
 - Causes: performance anxiety, unnecessary muscle activity; also be stress related, incorrect posture, unnecessary pressure, teeth clenching, etc.

Relaxation methods

- **Chair Pulls:** sit upright with back firmly against the chair backrest, feet flat on the floor,
 - Drop arms at your side and grab the bottom of the chair seat by cupping your hands under it,
 - Then pull up with your arms while holding the chair seat with your hands, try and hold this for at least 10 seconds. After try and let go of all the tension
- **Guided meditation- Progressive Muscle Relaxation**
 - Google “progressive muscle relaxation” then look under the video’s sections for videos of different length, then you just need to find one you like!
- With practice, you will learn to relax more quickly and can use this as a quick technique during breaks in performance.



Contract-Relax Muscle Relaxation Technique

- **Contract-Relax Muscle Technique.** Begin this contracting one part of your body and holding the contraction for 5 seconds, then relax those muscles. Then move on to the next area and repeat the cycle. You can start at the face by scrunching your face working your way down to your feet.

- **Hand flutter Technique:** Begin by relaxing your hands by your sides. Then flutter or shake your hands leaving them relaxed during the flutter. You can flutter the relaxed hands for about 5 shakes then relax and can repeat if needed.

Qigong Technique

- Chinese practice that emphasizes on aligning the body, breath, and mind.
- Important for musicians because this practice aids in relaxation to decrease stress and anxiety. It also offers different techniques that can improve posture and breathing specifically for musicians.
- Other Benefits include:
 - Able to decrease distractions during your playing time, making you more efficient.
 - Decrease in anxiety, which in turn will increase your confidence and improve your performance.
 - Decrease tension in the body.
- Below is a video you can access to perform this practice.

SOUL + BODY

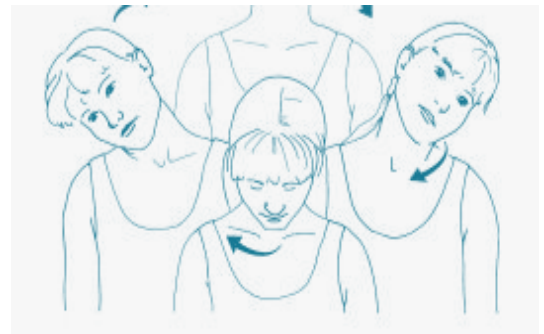


QI GONG FOR MUSICIANS

- <http://www.artistshousemusic.org/videos/qi+gong+exercises+for+musicians>
- For more information on this practice,, you can visit: http://www.scottleemusic.com/qi_gong_musicians.php

Yoga Routine for Stress in the upper body

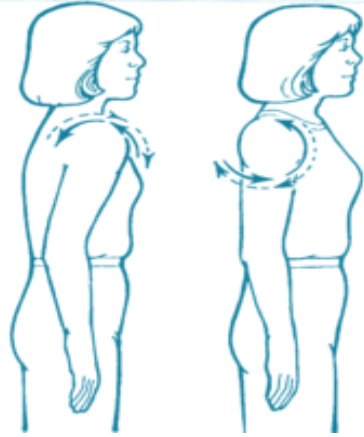
- Most musicians tend to carry their stress in the upper body. The following exercise routine is great to do before a performance, audition, or as a way to warm up the body before a practice session.
- All these exercises can be done in a comfortable seated or standing position
 - Connect with your full yogic breath. Do as many of these exercises as you would like, holding each stretch for 3–5 breaths
- **Neck Circles:** Rest chin on your chest. Breathe into the back of your neck for a few breaths to release any tension. As you are ready, inhale right ear to right shoulder and breathe into the left side of the neck. Exhale chin towards chest and inhale left ear to left shoulder, breathing into the right side of the neck.
 - Reverse the direction after a few circles.
 - Make sure you don't bend your neck backwards



- **Shoulders - tension/release and circles:**

Inhale and shrug the shoulders up to your ears. Squeeze the shoulders up as high as you can, holding the breath in. Exhale as you drop the shoulders. Relax, and repeat two more times.

- Next inhale and bring shoulder towards your ears, exhale rotating the shoulders back and down, opening up the chest area.
- After your shoulders come all the way down, inhale the shoulders forward, rounding the back, and continue the circles until the shoulders come all the way up to your ears again



- **Wrist and arm rotations:** With the elbows bent by your sides and shoulders relaxed, circle the wrists away from each other in front of you. As you do this, feel free to move the fingers creatively, loosening them up.

- Then rotate the fore arms and hands towards each other in a circle in front of the body, then rotate them away from each other in the opposite direction.

- **Eagle Arms:** Inhale and extend the arms out in a T position with your palms facing down. Exhale the right arm under the left arm, crossing at the elbows. Bend the elbows so that the palms face outward. So you end up like the picture

- Draw the right hand towards and palms come close to touching. Breathe into the back of the body opening up the shoulders. Rotate the elbows in circles in one direction, then in the other direction to loosen up the upper back.
- Then, inhale the elbows up and exhale the elbows down to feel the stretch in different places. Release the arms, shake it out, and repeat the whole sequence on the other side.



- For more information from this site go to this link

<http://www.artistshousemusic.org/articles/yoga+for+musicians>

- It has a few more exercises and some great details

- For more information on yoga, try this book!

- Musicians Yoga: A Guide To Practice Performance And Inspiration by Mia Olson